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THE RELATION OF THE NEGROES TO THE WHITES IN THE SOUTH.

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In the discussion of great social problems it is extremely difficult for those who are themselves actors in the drama to avoid the attitude of partisans and advocates. And yet I take it that the examination of the most serious of the race problems of America is not in the nature of a debate but rather a joint endeavor to seek the truth beneath a mass of assertion and opinion, of passion and distress. And I trust that whatever disagreement may arise between those who view the situation from opposite sides of the color line will be rather in the nature of additional information than of contradiction.

The world-old phenomenon of the contact of diverse races of men is to have new exemplification during the new century. Indeed the characteristic of the age is the contact of European civilization with the world's undeveloped peoples. Whatever we may say of the results of such contact in the past, it certainly forms a chapter in human action not pleasant to look back upon. War, murder, slavery, extermination and debauchery—this has again and again been the result of carrying civilization and the blessed gospel to the isles of the sea and the heathen without the law. Nor does it altogether satisfy the conscience of the modern world to be told complacently that all this has been right and proper, the fated triumph of strength over weakness, of righteousness over evil, of superiors over inferiors. It would certainly be soothing if one could readily believe all this, and yet there are too many ugly facts, for everything to be thus easily explained away. We feel and know that there are many delicate differences in race psychology,

numberless changes which our crude social measurements are not yet able to follow minutely, which explain much of history and social development. At the same time, too, we know that these considerations have never adequately explained or excused the triumph of brute force and cunning over weakness and innocence.

It is then the strife of all honorable men of the twentieth century to see that in the future competition of races, the survival of the fittest shall mean the triumph of the good, the beautiful and the true ; that we may be able to preserve for future civilization all that is really fine and noble and strong, and not continue to put a premium on greed and impudence and cruelty. To bring this hope to fruition we are compelled daily to turn more and more to a conscientious study of the phenomena of race contact—to a study frank and fair, and not falsified and colored by our wishes or our fears. And we have here in the South as fine a field for such a study as the world affords : a field to be sure which the average American scientist deems somewhat beneath his dignity, and which the average man who is not a scientist knows all about, but nevertheless a line of study which by reason of the enormous race complications, with which God seems about to punish this nation, must increasingly claim our sober attention, study and thought. We must ask : What are the actual relations of whites and blacks in the South, and we must be answered not by apology or fault-finding, but by a plain, unvarnished tale.

In the civilized life of to-day the contact of men and their relations to each other fall in a few main lines of action and communication : there is first the physical proximity of homes and dwelling places, the way in which neighborhoods group themselves, and the contiguity of neighborhoods. Secondly, and in our age chiefest, there are the economic relations—the methods by which individuals co-operate for earning a living, for the mutual satisfaction of wants, for the production of wealth. Next there are the political

relations, the co-operation in social control, in group government, in laying and paying the burden of taxation. In the fourth place there are the less tangible but highly important forms of intellectual contact and commerce, the interchange of ideas through conversation and conference, through periodicals and libraries, and above all the gradual formation for each community of that curious *tertium quid* which we call public opinion. Closely allied with this come the various forms of social contact in every-day life, in travel, in theatres, in house gatherings, in marrying and giving in marriage. Finally, there are the varying forms of religious enterprise, of moral teaching and benevolent endeavor.

These are the principal ways in which men living in the same communities are brought into contact with each other. It is my task this afternoon, therefore, to point out from my point of view how the black race in the South meets and mingles with the whites, in these matters of every-day life.

First as to physical dwelling, it is usually possible, as most of you know, to draw in nearly every Southern community a physical color line on the map, to the one side of which whites dwell and the other Negroes. The winding and intricacy of the geographical color line varies of course in different communities. I know some towns where a straight line drawn through the middle of the main street separates nine-tenths of the whites from nine-tenths of the blacks. In other towns the older settlement of whites has been encircled by a broad band of blacks; in still other cases little settlements or nuclei of blacks have sprung up amid surrounding whites. Usually in cities each street has its distinctive color, and only now and then do the colors meet in close proximity. Even in the country something of this segregation is manifest in the smaller areas, and of course in the larger phenomena of the black belt.

All this segregation by color is largely independent of that natural clustering by social grades common to all commu-

nities. A Negro slum may be in dangerous proximity to a white residence quarter, while it is quite common to find a white slum planted in the heart of a respectable Negro district. One thing, however, seldom occurs: the best of the whites and the best of the negroes almost never live in anything like close proximity. It thus happens that in nearly every Southern town and city, both whites and blacks see commonly the worst of each other. This is a vast change from the situation in the past when through the close contact of master and house-servant in the patriarchal big house, one found the best of both races in close contact and sympathy, while at the same time the squalor and dull round of toil among the field hands was removed from the sight and hearing of the family. One can easily see how a person who saw slavery thus from his father's parlors and sees freedom on the streets of a great city fails to grasp or comprehend the whole of the new picture. On the other hand the settled belief of the mass of the Negroes that the Southern white people do not have the black man's best interests at heart has been intensified in later years by this continual daily contact of the better class of blacks with the worst representatives of the white race.

Coming now to the economic relations of the races we are on ground made familiar by study, much discussion and no little philanthropic effort. And yet with all this there are many essential elements in the co-operation of Negroes and whites for work and wealth, that are too readily overlooked or not thoroughly understood. The average American can easily conceive of a rich land awaiting development and filled with black laborers. To him the Southern problem is simply that of making efficient workingmen out of this material by giving them the requisite technical skill and the help of invested capital. The problem, however, is by no means as simple as this, from the obvious fact that these workingmen have been trained for centuries as slaves. They exhibit, therefore, all the advantages and defects of such

training ; they are willing and good-natured, but not self-reliant, provident or careful. If now the economic development of the South is to be pushed to the verge of exploitation, as seems probable, then you have a mass of workingmen thrown into relentless competition with the workingmen of the world but handicapped by a training the very opposite to that of the modern self-reliant democratic laborer. What the black laborer needs is careful personal guidance, group leadership of men with hearts in their bosoms, to train them to foresight, carefulness and honesty. Nor does it require any fine-spun theories of racial differences to prove the necessity of such group training after the brains of the race have been knocked out by two hundred and fifty years of assiduous education in submission, carelessness and stealing. After emancipation it was the plain duty of some one to assume this group leadership and training of the Negro laborer. I will not stop here to inquire *whose* duty it was—whether that of the white ex-master who had profited by unpaid toil, or the Northern philanthropist whose persistence brought the crisis, or of the National Government whose edict freed the bondsmen—I will not stop to ask *whose* duty it was, but I insist it was the duty of *some one* to see that these workingmen were not left alone and unguided without capital, landless, without skill, without economic organization, without even the bald protection of law, order and decency ; left in a great land not to settle down to slow and careful internal dévelopment, but destined to be thrown almost immediately into relentless, sharp competition with the best of modern workingmen under an economic system where every participant is fighting for himself, and too often utterly regardless of the rights or welfare of his neighbor.

For we must never forget that the economic system of the South to-day which has succeeded the old régime is not the same system as that of the old industrial North, of England or of France with their trades unions, their restrictive laws, their written and unwritten commercial customs and their

long experience. It is rather a copy of that England of the early nineteenth century, before the factory acts, the England that wrung pity from thinkers and fired the wrath of Carlyle. The rod of empire that passed from the hands of Southern gentlemen in 1865, partly by force, partly by their own petulance, has never returned to them. Rather it has passed to those men who have come to take charge of the industrial exploitation of the New South—the sons of poor whites fired with a new thirst for wealth and power, thrifty and avaricious Yankees, shrewd and unscrupulous Jews. Into the hands of these men the Southern laborers, white and black, have fallen, and this to their sorrow. For the laborers as such there is in these new captains of industry neither love nor hate, neither sympathy nor romance—it is a cold question of dollars and dividends. Under such a system all labor is bound to suffer. Even the white laborers are not yet intelligent, thrifty and well trained enough to maintain themselves against the powerful inroads of organized capital. The result among them even, is long hours of toil, low wages, child labor, and lack of protection against usury and cheating. But among the black laborers all this is aggravated, first, by a race prejudice which varies from a doubt and distrust among the best element of whites to a frenzied hatred among the worst ; and, secondly, it is aggravated, as I have said before, by the wretched economic heritage of the freedmen from slavery. With this training it is difficult for the freedman to learn to grasp the opportunities already opened to him, and the new opportunities are seldom given him but go by favor to the whites.

Left by the best elements of the South with little protection or oversight, he has been made in law and custom the victim of the worst and most unscrupulous men in each community. The crop-lien system which is depopulating the fields of the South is not simply the result of shiftlessness on the part of Negroes but is also the result of cunningly devised laws as to mortgages, liens and misdemeanors which

can be made by conscienceless men to entrap and snare the unwary until escape is impossible, further toil a farce, and protest a crime. I have seen in the black belt of Georgia an ignorant, honest Negro buy and pay for a farm in installments three separate times, and then in the face of law and decency the enterprising Russian Jew who sold it to him pocketed money and deed and left the black man landless, to labor on his own land at thirty cents a day. I have seen a black farmer fall in debt to a white storekeeper and that storekeeper go to his farm and strip it of every single marketable article—mules, plows, stored crops, tools, furniture, bedding, clocks, looking-glass, and all this without a warrant, without process of law, without a sheriff or officer, in the face of the law for homestead exemptions, and without rendering to a single responsible person any account or reckoning. And such proceedings can happen and will happen in any community where a class of ignorant toilers are placed by custom and race prejudice beyond the pale of sympathy and race brotherhood. So long as the best elements of a community do not feel in duty bound to protect and train and care for the weaker members of their group they leave them to be preyed upon by these swindlers and rascals.

This unfortunate economic situation does not mean the hindrance of all advance in the black south, or the absence of a class of black landlords and mechanics who, in spite of disadvantages, are accumulating property and making good citizens. But it does mean that this class is not nearly so large as a fairer economic system might easily make it, that those who survive in the competition are handicapped so as to accomplish much less than they deserve to, and that above all, the personnel of the successful class is left to chance and accident, and not to any intelligent culling or reasonable methods of selection. As a remedy for this, there is but one possible procedure. We must accept some of the race prejudice in the South as a

fact—deplorable in its intensity, unfortunate in results, and dangerous for the future, but nevertheless a hard fact which only time can efface. We cannot hope then in this generation, or for several generations, that the mass of the whites can be brought to assume that close sympathetic and self-sacrificing leadership of the blacks which their present situation so eloquently demands. Such leadership, such social teaching and example, must come from the blacks themselves. For sometime men doubted as to whether the Negro could develop such leaders, but to-day no one seriously disputes the capability of individual Negroes to assimilate the culture and common sense of modern civilization, and to pass it on to some extent, at least, to their fellows. If this be true, then here is the path out of the economic situation, and here is the imperative demand for trained Negro leaders of character and intelligence, men of skill, men of light and leading, college-bred men, black captains of industry and missionaries of culture. Men who thoroughly comprehend and know modern civilization and can take hold of Negro communities and raise and train them by force of precept and example, deep sympathy and the inspiration of common blood and ideals. But if such men are to be effective they must have some power—they must be backed by the best public opinion of these communities, and able to wield for their objects and aims such weapons as the experience of the world has taught are indispensable to human progress,

Of such weapons the greatest, perhaps, in the modern world is the power of the ballot, and this brings me to a consideration of the third form of contact between whites and blacks in the South—political activity.

In the attitude of the American mind toward Negro suffrage, can be traced with singular accuracy the prevalent conceptions of government. In the sixties we were near enough the echoes of the French Revolution to believe pretty thoroughly in universal suffrage. We argued, as we

thought then rather logically, that no social class was so good, so true and so disinterested as to be trusted wholly with the political destiny of their neighbors ; that in every state the best arbiters of their own welfare are the persons directly affected, consequently it is only by arming every hand with a ballot—with the right to have a voice in the policy of the state—that the greatest good to the greatest number could be attained. To be sure there were objections to these arguments, but we thought we had answered them tersely and convincingly ; if some one complained of the ignorance of voters, we answered : “Educate them.” If another complained of their venality we replied : “Disfranchise them or put them in jail.” And finally to the men who feared demagogues and the natural perversity of some human beings, we insisted that time and bitter experience would teach the most hardheaded. It was at this time that the question of Negro suffrage in the South was raised. Here was a defenseless people suddenly made free. How were they to be protected from those who did not believe in their freedom and were determined to thwart it ? Not by force, said the North ; not by government guardianship, said the South ; then by the ballot, the sole and legitimate defense of a free people, said the Common Sense of the nation. No one thought at the time that the ex-slaves could use the ballot intelligently or very effectively, but they did think that the possession of so great power, by a great class in the nation would compel their fellows to educate this class to its intelligent use.

Meantime new thoughts came to the nation: the inevitable period of moral retrogression and political trickery that ever follows in the wake of war overtook us. So flagrant became the political scandals that reputable men began to leave politics alone, and politics consequently became disreputable. Men began to pride themselves on having nothing to do with their own government and to agree tacitly with those who regarded public office as a private perquisite. In this

state of mind it became easy to wink at the suppression of the Negro vote in the South, and to advise self-respecting Negroes to leave politics entirely alone. The decent and reputable citizens of the North who neglected their own civic duties grew hilarious over the exaggerated importance with which the Negro regarded the franchise. Thus it easily happened that more and more the better class of Negroes followed the advice from abroad and the pressure from home and took no further interest in politics, leaving to the careless and the venal of their race the exercise of their rights as voters. This black vote which still remained was not trained and educated but further debauched by open and unblushing bribery, or force and fraud, until the Negro voter was thoroughly inoculated with the idea that politics was a method of private gain by disreputable means.

And finally, now, to-day, when we are awakening to the fact that the perpetuity of republican institutions on this continent depends on the purification of the ballot, the civic training of voters, and the raising of voting to the plane of a solemn duty which a patriotic citizen neglects to his peril and to the peril of his children's children—in this day when we are striving for a renaissance of civic virtue, what are we going to say to the black voter of the South? Are we going to tell him still that politics is a disreputable and useless form of human activity? Are we going to induce the best class of Negroes to take less and less interest in government and give up their right to take such an interest without a protest? I am not saying a word against all legitimate efforts to purge the ballot of ignorance, pauperism and crime. But few have pretended that the present movement for disfranchisement in the South is for such a purpose ; it has been plainly and frankly declared in nearly every case that the object of the disfranchising laws is the elimination of the black man from politics.

Now is this a minor matter which has no influence on the main question of the industrial and intellectual development

of the Negro? Can we establish a mass of black laborers, artisans and landholders in the South who by law and public opinion have absolutely no voice in shaping the laws under which they live and work. Can the modern organization of industry, assuming as it does free democratic government and the power and ability of the laboring classes to compel respect for their welfare—can this system be carried out in the South when half its laboring force is voiceless in the public councils and powerless in its own defense? To-day the black man of the South has almost nothing to say as to how much he shall be taxed, or how those taxes shall be expended; as to who shall execute the laws and how they shall do it; as to who shall make the laws and how they shall be made. It is pitiable that frantic efforts must be made at critical times to get lawmakers in some states even to listen to the respectful presentation of the black side of a current controversy. Daily the Negro is coming more and more to look upon law and justice not as protecting safeguards but as sources of humiliation and oppression. The laws are made by men who as yet have little interest in him; they are executed by men who have absolutely no motive for treating the black people with courtesy or consideration, and finally the accused lawbreaker is tried not by his peers but too often by men who would rather punish ten innocent Negroes than let one guilty one escape.

I should be the last one to deny the patent weaknesses and shortcomings of the Negro people; I should be the last to withhold sympathy from the white South in its efforts to solve its intricate social problems. I freely acknowledge that it is possible and sometimes best that a partially undeveloped people should be ruled by the best of their stronger and better neighbors for their own good, until such time as they can start and fight the world's battles alone. I have already pointed out how sorely in need of such economic and spiritual guidance the emancipated Negro was, and I am quite willing to admit that if the representatives of the

best white southern public opinion were the ruling and guiding powers in the South to-day that the conditions indicated would be fairly well fulfilled. But the point I have insisted upon and now emphasize again is that the best opinion of the South to-day is not the ruling opinion. That to leave the Negro helpless and without a ballot to-day is to leave him not to the guidance of the best but rather to the exploitation and debauchment of the worst ; that this is no truer of the South than of the North—of the North than of Europe—in any land, in any country under modern free competition, to lay any class of weak and despised people, be they white, black or blue, at the political mercy of their stronger, richer and more resourceful fellows is a temptation which human nature seldom has and seldom will withstand.

Moreover the political status of the Negro in the South is closely connected with the question of Negro crime. There can be no doubt that crime among Negroes has greatly increased in the last twenty years and that there has appeared in the slums of great cities a distinct criminal class among the blacks. In explaining this unfortunate development we must note two things, (1) that the inevitable result of emancipation was to increase crime and criminals, and (2) that the police system of the South was primarily designed to control slaves. As to the first point we must not forget that under a strict slave régime there can scarcely be such a thing as crime. But when these variously constituted human particles are suddenly thrown broadcast on the sea of life, some swim, some sink, and some hang suspended, to be forced up or down by the chance currents of a busy hurrying world. So great an economic and social revolution as swept the South in '63 meant a weeding out among the Negroes of the incompetents and vicious—the beginning of a differentiation of social grades. Now a rising group of people are not lifted bodily from the ground like an inert solid mass, but rather stretch upward like a living plant with its roots still clinging in the mold. The appearance, therefore, of the Negro criminal was

a phenomenon to be awaited, and while it causes anxiety it should not occasion surprise.

Here again the hope for the future depended peculiarly on careful and delicate dealing with these criminals. Their offenses at first were those of laziness, carelessness and impulse rather than of malignity or ungoverned viciousness. Such misdemeanors needed discriminating treatment, firm but reformatory, with no hint of injustice and full proof of guilt. For such dealing with criminals, white or black, the South had no machinery, no adequate jails or reformatories and a police system arranged to deal with blacks alone, and which tacitly assumed that every white man was *ipso facto* a member of that police. Thus grew up a double system of justice which erred on the white side by undue leniency and the practical immunity of red-handed criminals, and erred on the black side by undue severity, injustice and lack of discrimination. For, as I have said, the police system of the South was originally designed to keep track of all Negroes, not simply of criminals, and when the Negroes were freed and the whole South was convinced of the impossibility of free Negro labor, the first and almost universal device was to use the courts as a means of re-enslaving the blacks. It was not then a question of crime but rather of color that settled a man's conviction on almost any charge. Thus Negroes came to look upon courts as instruments of injustice and oppression, and upon those convicted in them as martyrs and victims.

When now the real Negro criminal appeared and, instead of petty stealing and vagrancy, we began to have highway robbery, burglary, murder and rape, it had a curious effect on both sides the color line ; the Negroes refused to believe the evidence of white witnesses or the fairness of white juries, so that the greatest deterrent to crime, the public opinion of one's own social caste was lost and the criminal still looked upon as crucified rather than hanged. On the other hand the whites, used to being careless as to the guilt or inno-

cence of accused Negroes, were swept in moments of passion beyond law, reason and decency. Such a situation is bound to increase crime and has increased it. To natural viciousness and vagrancy is being daily added motives of revolt and revenge which stir up all the latent savagery of both races and make peaceful attention to economic development often impossible.

But the chief problem in any community cursed with crime is not the punishment of the criminals but the preventing of the young from being trained to crime. And here again the peculiar conditions of the South have prevented proper precautions. I have seen twelve-year-old boys working in chains on the public streets of Atlanta, directly in front of the schools, in company with old and hardened criminals; and this indiscriminate mingling of men, women and children makes the chain-gangs perfect schools of crime and debauchery. The struggle for reformatories which has gone on in Virginia, Georgia and other states is the one encouraging sign of the awakening of some communities to the suicidal results of this policy.

It is the public schools, however, which can be made outside the homes the greatest means of training decent self-respecting citizens. We have been so hotly engaged recently in discussing trade schools and the higher education that the pitiable plight of the public school system in the South has almost dropped from view. Of every five dollars spent for public education in the State of Georgia the white schools get four dollars and the Negro one dollar, and even then the white public school system, save in the cities, is bad and cries for reform. If this be true of the whites, what of the blacks? I am becoming more and more convinced as I look upon the system of common school training in the South that the national government must soon step in and aid popular education in some way. To-day it has been only by the most strenuous efforts on the part of the thinking men of the South that the Negro's share of the school fund has not been cut

down to a pittance in some half dozen states, and that movement not only is not dead but in many communities is gaining strength. What in the name of reason does this nation expect of a people poorly trained and hard pressed in severe economic competition, without political rights and with ludicrously inadequate common school facilities? What can it expect but crime and listlessness, offset here and there by the dogged struggles of the fortunate and more determined who are themselves buoyed by the hope that in due time the country will come to its senses?

I have thus far sought to make clear the physical economic and political relations of the Negroes and whites in the South as I have conceived them, including for the reasons set forth, crime and education. But after all that has been said on these more tangible matters of human contact there still remains a part essential to a proper description of the South which it is difficult to describe or fix in terms easily understood by strangers. It is, in fine, the atmosphere of the land, the thought and feeling, the thousand and one little actions which go to make up life. In any community or nation it is these little things which are most elusive to the grasp and yet most essential to any clear conception of the group life, taken as a whole. What is thus true of all communities is peculiarly true of the South where, outside of written history and outside of printed law, there has been going on for a generation, as deep a storm and stress of human souls, as intense a ferment of feeling, as intricate a writhing of spirit as ever a people experienced. Within and without the sombre veil of color, vast social forces have been at work, efforts for human betterment, movements toward disintegration and despair, tragedies and comedies in social and economic life, and a swaying and lifting and sinking of human hearts which have made this land a land of mingled sorrow and joy, of change and excitement.

The centre of this spiritual turmoil has ever been the millions of black freedmen and their sons, whose destiny is

so fatefully bound up with that of the nation. And yet the casual observer visiting the South sees at first little of this. He notes the growing frequency of dark faces as he rides on, but otherwise the days slip lazily on, the sun shines and this little world seems as happy and contented as other worlds he has visited. Indeed, on the question of questions, the Negro problem, he hears so little that there almost seems to be a conspiracy of silence ; the morning papers seldom mention it, and then usually in a far-fetched academic way, and indeed almost every one seems to forget and ignore the darker half of the land, until the astonished visitor is inclined to ask if after all there *is* any problem here. But if he lingers long enough there comes the awakening : perhaps in a sudden whirl of passion which leaves him gasping at its bitter intensity ; more likely in a gradually dawning sense of things he had not at first noticed. Slowly but surely his eyes begin to catch the shadows of the color line; here he meets crowds of Negroes and whites ; then he is suddenly aware that he cannot discover a single dark face ; or again at the close of a day's wandering he may find himself in some strange assembly, where all faces are tinged brown or black, and where he has the vague uncomfortable feeling of the stranger. He realizes at last that silently, resistlessly, the world about flows by him in two great streams. They ripple on in the same sunshine, they approach here and mingle their waters in seeming carelessness, they divide then and flow wide apart. It is done quietly, no mistakes are made, or if one occurs the swift arm of the law and public opinion swings down for a moment, as when the other day a black man and a white woman were arrested for talking together on Whitehall street, in Atlanta.

Now if one notices carefully one will see that between these two worlds, despite much physical contact and daily intermingling, there is almost no community of intellectual life or points of transferrence where the thoughts and feelings of one race can come with direct contact and sympathy with

the thoughts and feelings of the other. Before and directly after the war when all the best of the Negroes were domestic servants in the best of the white families, there were bonds of intimacy, affection, and sometimes blood relationship between the races. They lived in the same home, shared in the family life, attended the same church often and talked and conversed with each other. But the increasing civilization of the Negro since has naturally meant the development of higher classes: there are increasing numbers of ministers, teachers, physicians, merchants, mechanics and independent farmers, who by nature and training are the aristocracy and leaders of the blacks. Between them, however, and the best element of the whites, there is little or no intellectual commerce. They go to separate churches, they live in separate sections, they are strictly separated in all public gatherings, they travel separately, and they are beginning to read different papers and books. To most libraries, lectures, concerts and museums Negroes are either not admitted at all or on terms peculiarly galling to the pride of the very classes who might otherwise be attracted. The daily paper chronicles the doings of the black world from afar with no great regard for accuracy; and so on throughout the category of means for intellectual communication; schools, conferences, efforts for social betterment and the like, it is usually true that the very representatives of the two races who for mutual benefit and the welfare of the land ought to be in complete understanding and sympathy are so far strangers that one side thinks all whites are narrow and prejudiced and the other thinks educated Negroes dangerous and insolent. Moreover, in a land where the tyranny of public opinion and the intolerance of criticism is for obvious historical reasons so strong as in the South, such a situation is extremely difficult to correct. The white man as well as the Negro is bound and tied by the color line and many a scheme of friendliness and philanthropy, of broad-minded sympathy, and generous fellowship between the two has

dropped still-born because some busy-body has forced the color question to the front and brought the tremendous force of unwritten law against the innovators.

It is hardly necessary for me to add to this very much in regard to the social contact between the races. Nothing has come to replace that finer sympathy and love between some masters and house servants, which the radical and more uncompromising drawing of the color line in recent years has caused almost completely to disappear. In a world where it means so much to take a man by the hand and sit beside him ; to look frankly into his eyes and feel his heart beating with red blood—in a world where a social cigar or a cup of tea together means more than legislative halls and magazine articles and speeches, one can imagine the consequences of the almost utter absence of such social amenities between estranged races, whose separation extends even to parks and street cars.

Here there can be none of that social going down to the people ; the opening of heart and hand of the best to the worst, in generous acknowledgment of a common humanity and a common destiny. On the other hand, in matters of simple almsgiving, where there be no question of social contact, and in the succor of the aged and sick, the South, as if stirred by a feeling of its unfortunate limitations, is generous to a fault. The black beggar is never turned away without a good deal more than a crust, and a call for help for the unfortunate meets quick response. I remember, one cold winter, in Atlanta, when I refrained from contributing to a public relief fund lest Negroes should be discriminated against ; I afterward inquired of a friend : “ Were any black people receiving aid ? ” “ Why,” said he, “ they were *all* black.”

And yet this does not touch the kernel of the problem. Human advancement is not a mere question of almsgiving, but rather of sympathy and co-operation among classes who would scorn charity. And here is a land where, in the higher walks of life, in all the higher striving for the good

and noble and true, the color line comes to separate natural friends and co-workers, while at the bottom of the social group in the saloon, the gambling hell and the bawdy-house that same line wavers and disappears.

I have sought to paint an average picture of real relations between the races in the South. I have not glossed over matters for policy's sake, for I fear we have already gone too far in that sort of thing. On the other hand I have sincerely sought to let no unfair exaggerations creep in. I do not doubt but that in some Southern communities conditions are far better than those I have indicated. On the other hand, I am certain that in other communities they are far worse.

Nor does the paradox and danger of this situation fail to interest and perplex the best conscience of the South. Deeply religious and intensely democratic as are the mass of the whites, they feel acutely the false position in which the Negro problems place them. Such an essentially honest-hearted and generous people cannot cite the caste-leveling precepts of Christianity, or believe in equality of opportunity for all men, without coming to feel more and more with each generation that the present drawing of the color line is a flat contradiction to their beliefs and professions. But just as often as they come to this point the present social condition of the Negro stands as a menace and a portent before even the most open-minded : if there were nothing to charge against the Negro but his blackness or other physical peculiarities, they argue, the problem would be comparatively simple ; but what can we say to his ignorance, shiftlessness, poverty and crime : can a self-respecting group hold anything but the least possible fellowship with such persons and survive ? and shall we let a mawkish sentiment sweep away the culture of our fathers or the hope of our children ? The argument so put is of great strength but it is not a whit stronger than the argument of thinking Negroes ; granted, they reply, that the condition of our masses is bad, there is certainly on the one hand adequate

historical cause for this, and unmistakable evidence that no small number have, in spite of tremendous disadvantages, risen to the level of American civilization. And when by proscription and prejudice, these same Negroes are classed with, and treated like the lowest of their people simply because they are Negroes, such a policy not only discourages thrift and intelligence among black men, but puts a direct premium on the very things you complain of—inefficiency and crime. Draw lines of crime, of incompetency, of vice as tightly and uncompromisingly as you will, for these things must be proscribed, but a color line not only does not accomplish this purpose, but thwarts it.

In the face of two such arguments, the future of the South depends on the ability of the representatives of these opposing views to see and appreciate, and sympathize with each other's position ; for the Negro to realize more deeply than he does at present the need of uplifting the masses of his people, for the white people to realize more vividly than they have yet done the deadening and disastrous effect of a color prejudice that classes Paul Lawrence Dunbar and Sam Hose in the same despised class.

It is not enough for the Negroes to declare that color prejudice is the sole cause of their social condition, nor for the white South to reply that their social condition is the main cause of prejudice. They both act as reciprocal cause and effect and a change in either *alone* will bring the desired effect. Both must change or neither can improve to any great extent. The Negro cannot stand the present reactionary tendencies and unreasoning drawing of the color line much longer without discouragement and retrogression. And the condition of the Negro is ever the excuse for further discrimination. Only by a union of intelligence and sympathy across the color line in this critical period of the Republic shall justice and right triumph, and

“ Mind and heart according well,
Shall make one music as before,
But vaster.”